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Illustration by Charles Overman

Should Wives Be SPANKED?

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IF YOU are the average husband, there have been times when you've itched to give your wife a good, old-fashioned spanking. The chances are, everything considered, that you never actually did it, but I'll guarantee you've wondered whether it would not have been a good idea. In some ways, it might, BUT—

Women—as I realize I am not the first man to note—are a funny proposition, though thanks to psychology, they are not quite as mysterious as they once were.

"I think Fred's the nicest man I know," said an attractive girl to me the other day. "We're thoroughly congenial, and have marvelous times going out together, but I simply could not marry him. I can't stand the way he lets me push him around."

Being a psychologist, I skipped the obvious question: "What makes you push him around, then?" For my young friend was just showing one more facet of the age-old contradiction in the feminine mind which has probably done more than anything else to make a woman's mental processes seem incomprehensible to the bewildered male.

You see, no matter what else she may want, the average girl wants to make sure the man she marries is essentially stronger than she is. The need is based equally on the atmosphere she was brought up in, and her own, originally childish wish for "somebody to depend on." But the only way a girl can be sure of a man's strength is to test it, which she generally does by finding out

A psychologist examines the strange mental quirks behind ruthlessness in love

just how much she can get away with. Paradoxically, the less she succeeds, the harder she tries; and yet if she really succeeds, she loses all interest in the man who has been proved a weakling.

Naturally, different girls have different ideas of what constitutes a strong man, but few of them have entirely out-grown the feeling that sheer physical superiority—demonstrable by force if necessary—lies at the bottom of it. And while the law does not permit this superiority to take the form of violence, as it once did (the old common law allowed a man to beat his wife provided he used a stick "no bigger than his thumb"), there are few women for whom the idea of violence does not have at least a little fascination.

John Barrymore has his foibles, and there are four women, anyhow—the four wives who have sued him for divorce—who have sworn that he is pretty hard to live with. But so far as making a hit with the fair sex goes, not many men can match his record. And John never has made any secret of his readiness to "treat 'em rough," when necessary. In fact, the immediate occasion for the break-up of his latest marriage was the spanking he gave Elaine Barrie in the last performance of the play, "My Dear Children," in which they appeared together.

True, the spanking was ostensibly part of the business of the play—Barrymore, in the role of his wife's stage father, was called on to use the oldest of all forms of discipline upon her—but this time he acted so over-convincingly that it is said Elaine had to choose her chair with caution for several days afterward. Nor was this the first time he had "laid a hand"—or anyway, a foot—on her: she testified in a previous divorce suit that he had a way of kicking her under the table, even when they had guests, if she said or did things that annoyed him. Yet that evidently did not destroy his attraction for her, since she withdrew the suit and remained married to him for another two years.

Of course Barrymore is the soul of light-heartedness and normality, and never could be accused of being cruel for cruelty's sake, but psychology has developed its own terms for those persons who derive a thrill from practising of suffering violence, especially in love-making.

Those who have an urge to hurt the objects of their passion are called "sadists," from a famous Frenchman, the Marquis de Sade; while those who (believe it or not!) derive the most intense pleasure from being hurt are called "masochists," after a character in a morbid German novel. And though either of these types of abnormality is relatively rare in its extreme form, traces of them are found in most people. Most women, especially, show signs of some degree of masochism, sometimes in the rather obscure form of what is called a "martyr complex," and sometimes in direct sensuous enjoyment of roughness or ruthlessness from the man they love.

"Jimmy" Cagney is another actor who found women are thrilled by rough treatment—it was a scene in which he threw a grapefruit at his wife at the breakfast table that made him the idol of the feminine movie-goers, and inaugurated a new screen fashion. Though in fact, the fashion was not so new as they called it: before Cagney there was the original "Sheik," Rudolph Valentino, whose subtly sadistic role, though acted by a man, was the creation of a woman author and reflected the innermost yearnings of millions of feminine hearts.

John Barrymore takes his "daughter" in hand. She's actress Doris Dudley in this case and replaced Elaine Barrie in the role when Elaine asserted that Husband John really meant it.

But where did this yearning come from?

Like most of our mental secrets, it goes back to childhood—to those first impressions of life which have such a powerful effect upon our mental processes forever after. As is now known, many, and perhaps most children learn a great deal more about the so-called facts of life in their earliest years than their parents imagine. They pick up the infor- (*Continued on page* 60)

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mation, partly from observing animals (this is true particularly of farm children) and partly from watching their fathers and mothers at times when they are supposed to be asleep, or "too young to take notice." A lot of these observations seem to be forgotten as the children grow up, but that does not wipe out the impressions they created.

In particular, the average child's impression of adult love-making is that it is an attack upon the female, in which the male is both ruthless, and apparently furious. Thus a girl—without the least idea why—may feel after she has grown up that a man who never "gets rough" or loses his temper is not quite a real man. Most girls, of course, would deny any such feeling, but the fascination of the caveman for most members of their sex proves its existence beyond question.

Some months ago I discussed the dangers of hypnotism with a world-famous psychiatrist, and he pointed out one danger which most people never thought of. "It is quite true," he agreed, "that even in the hypnotic trance a person will do nothing that is contrary to his essential nature, but, at least in her unconscious mind, the average woman has a wish to be ravished which an unprincipled man could easily take advantage of." And while in most women this wish is so deeply buried that they never know it exists, it often reveals its presence by the craving to be "mastered"—by violence, if necessary—by the man whom they love.

Certainly the converse impulse exists in men, and essentially for the same reason; but with us Americans it generally has been smothered more or less effectually by the years of "petticoat government" to which we are subjected, both in school and at home. At heart, most of us are too much in awe of our wives to be capable of showing violence toward them except under the stress of such overwhelming rage that we are likely to go too far with it. And the situation is still further complicated by the fact that *theoretically* the American woman is too busy trying to prove her equality with men to admit her masochistic yearnings—except in her choice of movie heroes.

On the whole, then, while a lot of wives would probably be happier if their husbands gave them an occasional spanking, a psychologist can hardly recommend the practice. Except in the course of something like a psychoanalysis, the primitive feelings of both men and women are best left in the dark corners of the mind in which civilized life has confined them. As a modern husband, your best plan is probably to make your wife feel that you would not be afraid to spank her if you felt that she deserved it, but love her too much and are too chivalrous to do it except under extreme provocation. A hint of ruthlessness in love-making is another matter; the man who is too weak or too timid to achieve that will both disappoint his wife and frustrate part of his own manhood.

The Crimson Camera Case

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though—light ruined it . . . What did you learn?"

"Plenty, Chief. I made a round of the late spots. I got a tip from a waiter at the Bungalow Cafe. On the night of May 1, Mrs. Lira spoke to this waiter over the phone and asked if Ernesto had been inquiring for her. When he answered in the affirmative she said to tell Lira, if he asked again, that she was in Williams on her way to Winslow. Now Williams is 75 miles northeast of Prescott and Winslow is ninety miles farther. I checked with the Prescott telephone exchange and that long distance call came from a restaurant in Cottonwood, only about forty miles from here. I got the restaurant proprietor on the phone and he said he recognized Mrs. Lira.

"Later, I talked with the night bartender of the Tivoli—and here's premeditation for you, Chief. A few hours before the death struggle, Lira says to the bartender, 'Be sure to tell anyone who telephones for me that I'm here busy playing cards and can't be bothered!'

"And then, sure enough, just after he left, a lady calls and gets the message as Lira left it. The bartender is sure the call was from Mrs Lira. Then I checked the taxis, and found the driver who told me he took Lira home."

"This outraged husband planned coolly for a crime of passion," remarked the undersheriff.

"Outraged husband, my eye!" cried the deputy. "Listen to this: You know that Arizona does not recognize common law marriage. I'll knock his 'unwritten law' defense into a cocked hat. I grilled a girl friend of Odessa and she told me that six years ago Odessa came to Prescott with the name of Odessa Webb."

Lira was taken into custody and, following the coroner's inquest Saturday, May 14th, he was charged with first degree murder. He denied his guilt when he was brought before Justice Clark but the Justice bound him over for trial.

Attractively outfitted in a brown jacket dress with matching hat and gloves, the fascinating Odessa Webb confessed to the crowded courtroom her dual role—with Lira and Lawrence.

At his trial Ernesto Lira sought mercy from the jury by relating his many acts of kindness to Marcus Lawrence.

County Attorney Charles Ewing and C. B. Wilson, who was assisting Ewing, reminded the Court that Lira had no right to refer to the breaking up of his home, since he and Odessa were not legally married according to the laws of the State. Pointing out that Lira had known of the association of Odessa and Lawrence, Ewing charged that Lira had encouraged the affair purposely in the hope that he could snap a picture and blackmail Marcus Jay Lawrence.

The jury was out three and one-half hours. At 3:15 on the afternoon of July 16, it instructed its foreman, Robert McCoy, to hand in a verdict of guilty of murder in the second degree. Judge Lamson sentenced the gambler to serve from 30 to 40 years in the State penitentiary.